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Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/634,086	CHU ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	David S. Blum	2813	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 5/4/05.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-20.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 04 August 2003 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date <u>7/19/05</u> . |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____ | 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance |
| | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____. |

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This action is in response to the amendment filed 5/4/05.

Reasons for Allowance

1. Claims 1-20 are allowed.
2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claims 1, and 12 limit the method of forming a semiconductor feature to providing a semiconductor substrate with a first opening in a dielectric layer, and an inorganic BARC layer on the surface, depositing and patterning a photoresist over the BARC layer and carrying out a first plasma assisted etch in a gas containing CO to harden the photoresist, thus increasing etching resistance, and carrying out a second etch into the dielectric layer to form a second opening. This limitation, in combination with the other limitations of claims 1 and 12 is not taught or suggested by the prior art of record. Chu (US2004/0192058) treats the photoresist in a separate step rather than in the first plasma etch. Also, as to combining Chu with other references, the applicant has stated that the application and Chu were, at the time of the (instant) invention, commonly owned by the same assignee (remarks 5/4/05). Liu (US006451703B1 and US006613689B2) teaches a similar process to of carrying out a first plasma assisted etch in a gas containing CO to alter the photoresist, thus increasing etching resistance, to form an opening, but does not teach this process to form a second opening (dual damascene) in a dielectric layer. The applicant has also submitted notice that Tsai (US006787455B2), Sue (US006638853), and Huang (US2004/0087167) were, at the

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time of the (instant) invention, commonly owned by the same assignee (letter 7/19/05 and 7/19/05).

Claims 10-11 are allowed as being properly dependent upon allowed claim 1.

Claims 13-20 are allowed as being properly dependent upon allowed claim 12.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David S. Blum whose telephone number is (571)-272-1687) and e-mail address is David.blum@USPTO.gov .

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Carl Whitehead Jr., can be reached at (571)-272-1702. Our facsimile number all patent correspondence to be entered into an application is (571) 273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DSB", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

David S. Blum

July 19, 2005